

"Experienced comrades point out that this ecstatic wave of revolt and then the subsequent disillusionment was something they all went through. The intensity of the struggle showed them what was possible, and the doldrums that followed taught them that the struggle was long and hard. And while I agree that learning to survive profound disappointment is essential to being a revolutionary, I think that more young people would hold on to the courage to hope if they weren't so alone, if more experienced radicals took them under their wings and actively invited them to participate in existing initiatives and structures, precisely to break out of this timeless cycle of resistance and repression; to seize on the delirious momentum of the revolt and help the new generation see that things don't have to go back to normal if they don't let them."



CREEKER

Volume 3



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The Delirious Momentum of the Revolt

You may also wish to check out a zine series called The Creeker Companion. It is curated to complement the Creeker zines with material that's relevant to Ada'itsx and similar movements, but much broader in scope. The two volumes explore topics such as movement history, security culture, state repression, critiques of nonviolence, and more. It's available on the website above.

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Will We Win?
Ada'itsx as a point of struggle
By carlo

So much has changed since that hot summer day in Ada'itsx. I was relaxing by a small waterfall deep in the forest when my friend lying beside me casually asked if I think we will win. An easy enough question but an elusive answer. As I thought about it I picked up a small stone and tossed it in the water. Fumbling around the question got me thinking deeper about what it was we were actually doing. The limits of what is possible and the limitless potential of possibility.

Are we trying to save the old growth? Are we standing up against Canadian colonialism? Are we fighting back against capitalism and its extractivist plundering? Who are we to even find ourselves in this position to weigh these questions?

A few years earlier at an anti capitalist demonstration, I found myself running down a side street escaping an onslaught of riot cops. A spray painted message read, “Freedom lies in the moment a stone is thrown.” Out of breath I smiled.

Yes of course it's about the last of the old growth, that's what started the conversation. More precisely though, it is Canadian colonization that started this whole process. To pretend otherwise plays into the nationalist mythology of the Canadian State. It is a layered conversation and an unspeakably brutal process. Intersectional realities and contradictory experiences have all played their role in putting us in the here and now of Ada'itsx.

It still begs the question though of where we are trying to go; where are we trying to take this struggle; what exactly are we trying to “win”. A bit of tokenistic legislation tinkering that saves the trees but leaves the colonial power structures firmly in place only strengthens the Canadian State. An empty land sort of reasoning that protects the flow of profit derived from exploitation, injustice, and subjugation. It's an effective hustle by state and corporate gangsters to keep everyone looking the other way both socially and geographically.

Ada'itsx represents an idea in motion, but only action informs it. The conversation would be nothing without action; the process of business as usual grinds if not for grassroots direct action. Successes, failures, and contradictions that shape us as both individuals and a collective, also shape our course of action. The State is acutely aware of this and is doing everything in its power to extinguish our capacity for action. Its counter insurgency strategy pursues full spectrum domination



that ranges from the raw violence of police and company thugs, to the more subtle manipulations of the popular narrative and our sense of self.

We need to push back against Ada'itsx being framed as a limited localized issue; we need to be vigilant against smiling eco-politicians intent on bringing us back into the fold of acceptable politics; and we need to be careful we don't start betraying one another over one choice of action or another. Our hope lies in our uncompromising spirit and in our collective solidarity.

The answer to what it is we are doing lies in the very act of learning through doing. Action creating a new reality that in turn ignites further action. It is precisely the intersectional nature of this struggle that will make clear what it is we are trying to win. Inspired by love, it is thoughtful reflection and collective action that are rewriting our idea of the possible. What we are doing is fundamentally confronting the rules of the game and thereby overturning the whole viscous logic upon which it peddles its legitimacy. Ada'itsx embodies a social rupture whose outcome is yet to be determined

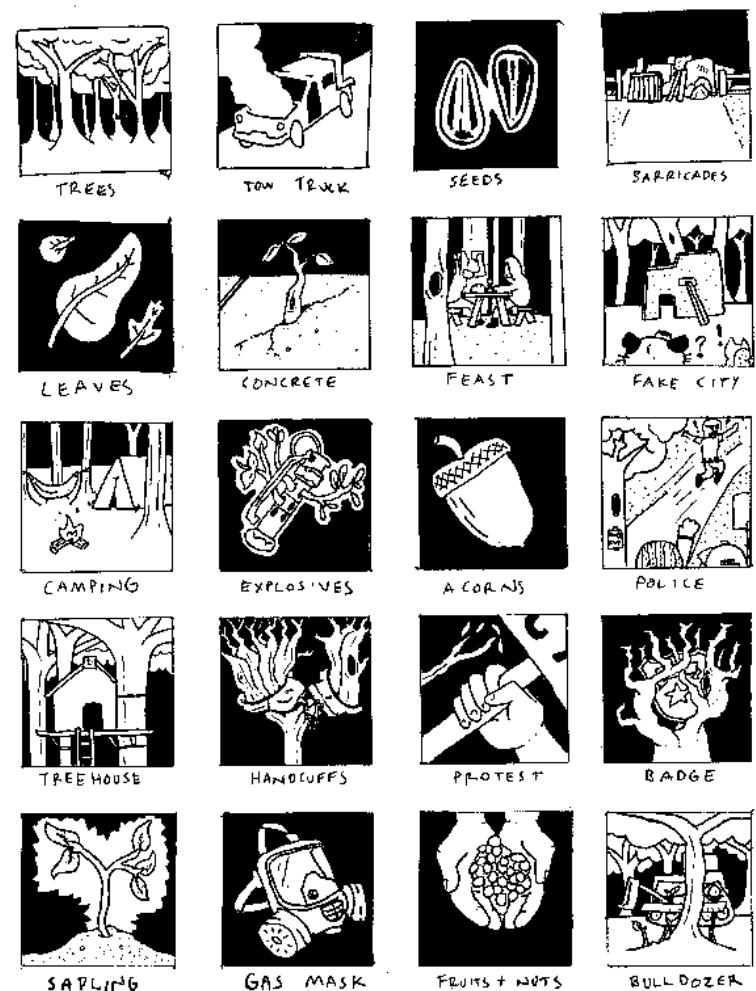
It is up to us to pry that stone from the ground and put it in the air; to put the idea into action. As it travels, it joins the many others. Like the radical youth of '68 said: beneath the pavement lies the beach!



sending you faxes, people are visiting your office. Some people are vandalizing your stores, are burning your equipment for the one contract. Nothing stops these companies from just doing business elsewhere.

Footnotes/Sources

1 For a history of the Green Scare and an overview of the SHAC strategy, see the article *Green Scared?* at crimethinc.com that goes over the history of the Green Scare, as well as *The SHAC Model: A Critical Assessment*, which gives a thorough account of the strategy used, as well as its advantages and disadvantages. A shorter section on the SHAC model is also covered in the *City in the Forest* zine. 2 communiqué source: scenes.noblogs.org 3 From the *Beneath the Concrete, the Forest* zine on crimethinc.com 4 Quote from an interview featured in Stop Cop City documentary youtube.com/watch?v=IV7f8ZUmsQA



Alta Vista Office Smashed in NYC²

"I hope that everyone can experience the pure joy of attack at least once in their life the way I do. If only you could feel how I feel, everything I do would make sense. The world is a beautiful place, have you seen the moon tonight? Have you stopped and listened to the land?"

A Quote from the Stop Cop City Documentary⁴

[...]The Atlanta Police Foundation (APF) wants to build Cop City, but they're not a construction company so they must buy services. In a certain way, they're an institution that represent the police but they're also a consumer in the construction marketplace. They want to buy certain services. And in order to buy those services, they have to find a general contractor. The general contractor they found is called Brassfield & Gorrie. They're a major construction contractor involved in border construction and gentrification and all kinds of stuff in the country. In any case, for our purposes, they're the general contractor in charge of structural engineering, blueprint making, zoning for Cop City. In addition to being a service provider for the APF, Brassfield & Gorrie is also a consumer. They're also shopping for services in the construction marketplace. And this is why they have subcontractors.

Well, the idea for the strategy is to separate the subcontractors from the contractor and the contractor from the APF. So if you've ever read *The Art of War*, the idea is that the highest form of war, in a kind of hierarchy of strategies, is to attack the strategy of your enemy. I feel that this movement was able to accomplish that by just kind of blowing the lid off the project. Like ultimately it was supposed to be a backroom deal that was pushed through, no one would know. And this movement kind of stopped that. In a way, it was like a good attack on the APF and their corporate backers. But then in Sun Tzu's writings, the second priority is to attack the alliances due to the connections of your adversary. You want to separate them all out, so you don't want the forces allying against you to be a big coalition of forces. That's what this phase of the movement is kind of about.

There is a company called Reeves Young that was involved in the boring and soil sampling process of the development. And there was a lot of demonstrations against them at their offices. There was action at the home of the CEO. There is sabotage of some of their equipment here and elsewhere. And ultimately they did the right thing, they moved their money elsewhere. Because that's a part of how all this is working. These companies have a lot of contracts. You know, it's not an existential attack on the company. They have a lot of work. They have a lot of contracts, a lot of money to be made out there in construction.

And the idea is, if you deal with the APF, you'll deal with us. For this one contract, people are coming to your house. For this one contract, people are visiting your church. For this one contract, people are flooding your phone lines, people are

Rebellious Initiatives: Sometimes the Best Way to Defend is to Attack *Resistance to coal mining on vancouver island* by anonymous

Then the coal company came with the world's largest shovel
And they tortured the timber and stripped all the land
Well, they dug for their coal till the land was forsaken
Then they wrote it all down as the progress of man.

— John Prine, *Paradise*

A decade ago on Vancouver Island, Compliance Energy Corporation (CEC) was pushing to start a new coal mine on Pentlatch Territory, adjacent to Union Bay and Fanny Bay.¹ If successful, it would be the first of several planned for the area, in the foothills of the Beaufort Range near the K'omoks Valley and its trio of urban centres: Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland. Already logged beyond devastation, the land where the mine was to be located is privately held by Island Timberlands - a result of being stolen 150 years ago as part of the E&N Land Grab, which led to Robert Dunsmuir buying 20% of the Island in 1884 and making millions extracting its coal and timber.

Branded the "Raven" Coal Mine by CEC, the coal was planned to be transported to Port Alberni for shipping, which would require industrial infrastructure development and port expansion from the new mine along the shore of the Salish Sea, across the Island to Alberni Inlet.

Progressive environmentalists and ENGOs were outspoken against it, and broadly speaking, limited themselves to a predictable set of tactics: education/awareness raising campaigns, writing letters, signing petitions, public protests, etc...

Meanwhile, instead of exhausting all such legal avenues *before* engaging in civil disobedience as a last resort – as is often the routine in social movements – anarchists and other rebels were clear in their resolve to use direct action (not civil disobedience) against the mine, before it even got close to becoming a physical reality.

Some rebels engaged in public-facing informational tactics against the mine and in favour of direct action, but they tended to do so autonomously, free of the constraints of liberal environmentalists and ENGOs, and their boring politics of compromise.

They also criticized liberals and progressives for legitimizing the mine's state capitalist Environmental Assessment process by participating in it as its token opposition. Why do anything to enable such a sham, rigged to create an illusion of 'social license' for the mine by absorbing resistance to it?²

Insurrection will never be the political activity of revolutionaries, for it is the criminal activity of becoming human.

-August O'Claire³



The following are some events which occurred in resistance to the Raven coal mine, c. 2010-2013. This is neither an exhaustive nor comprehensive timeline, but perhaps it conveys the spirit of those times:

★**2010-2011:** Anarchists and other rebels agitate against the mine, creating and distributing educational resources, including zines such as *Raven Coal and Empire*. Its opening words include the following: "We do not wish to hide our contempt for the bosses and their apologists. The continuation of their projects destroys the ability for natural systems to support us, and increases our reliance on the economy and those that control it [...] We encourage you to not get discouraged by the overwhelming state of things, and to be empowered to defend our communities."⁴

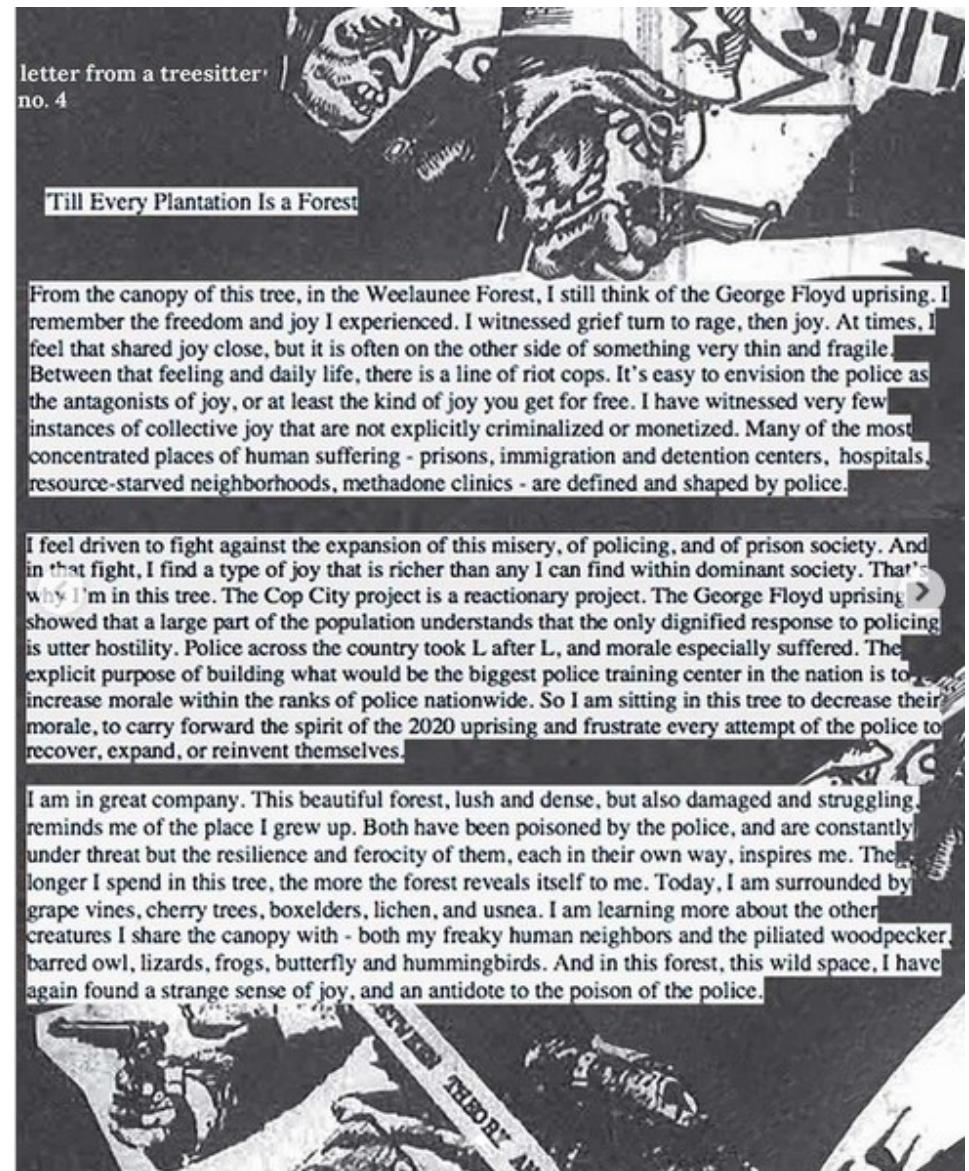
★**May 2012:** An industry conference in Vancouver focusing on the Raven coal mine – attended by 100 people -- is effectively shut down by half a dozen militants. They disrupt the event when keynote speaker John Tapics, the CEO of CEC, begins to speak about social opposition to the Raven mine. With decaying herring unleashed upon the suits and captains of industry, "a chaotic stench and nauseating shower of fermented fish engulfed the room. Herring are only one of the species that will be negatively effected by the mining development. Simultaneously, coal tumbled onto the ground. The wondrous blend created by insurgent passion was too overwhelming for the industrial capital bosses to handle."

The militants tossed anti-mine pamphlets in the air, shouting "It has Begun! No Compliance! No Compromise! No Coal!" while attendees had to step in the mix of herring and coal as they made their exit, beating a hasty retreat from their own event. The carpet at the luxury venue had to be replaced at a cost of \$50,000.⁵ "The coal, the herring, what a sight, what a smell: never to be whipped, chained, or owned into submission. A great force used to crash the daydreams and sick fantasies of industrial development [...] We do not accept the false temptation of economic development. We will not poison ourselves, each other or the earth to survive [...] Towards a Liberated Reality with Minerals in the Ground and Fish in the Sea."⁶

★**Jun 2012:** Anarchists drop anti-mine banners and put up anti-mine posters around Courtenay, and effectively shut down the local Bank of Montreal (BMO) bank at midday with an unannounced noise demonstration, black flags, leaflets, and a banner dropped from its roof. One of the banners says

Brassfield & Gorrie Site Attacked²

[...]But when workers attempted to turn on their machines, they encountered problems. Four of their large destruction vehicles had been tampered with. Wires cut, locks glued shut, water valves and exhaust pipes clogged with foam, etc. And written in red paint across the glass walls was a clear message: STOP COP CITY. Some wondered, how could this be? The site undergoes 24 hour surveillance. Maybe they aren't as invulnerable as they'd like you to think... [...]



From the canopy of this tree, in the Weelaunee Forest, I still think of the George Floyd uprising. I remember the freedom and joy I experienced. I witnessed grief turn to rage, then joy. At times, I feel that shared joy close, but it is often on the other side of something very thin and fragile. Between that feeling and daily life, there is a line of riot cops. It's easy to envision the police as the antagonists of joy, or at least the kind of joy you get for free. I have witnessed very few instances of collective joy that are not explicitly criminalized or monetized. Many of the most concentrated places of human suffering - prisons, immigration and detention centers, hospitals, resource-starved neighborhoods, methadone clinics - are defined and shaped by police.

I feel driven to fight against the expansion of this misery, of policing, and of prison society. And in that fight, I find a type of joy that is richer than any I can find within dominant society. That's why I'm in this tree. The Cop City project is a reactionary project. The George Floyd uprising showed that a large part of the population understands that the only dignified response to policing is utter hostility. Police across the country took L after L, and morale especially suffered. The explicit purpose of building what would be the biggest police training center in the nation is to increase morale within the ranks of police nationwide. So I am sitting in this tree to decrease their morale, to carry forward the spirit of the 2020 uprising and frustrate every attempt of the police to recover, expand, or reinvent themselves.

I am in great company. This beautiful forest, lush and dense, but also damaged and struggling, reminds me of the place I grew up. Both have been poisoned by the police, and are constantly under threat but the resilience and ferocity of them, each in their own way, inspires me. The longer I spend in this tree, the more the forest reveals itself to me. Today, I am surrounded by grape vines, cherry trees, boxelders, lichen, and usnea. I am learning more about the other creatures I share the canopy with - both my freaky human neighbors and the piliated woodpecker, barred owl, lizards, frogs, butterfly and hummingbirds. And in this forest, this wild space, I have again found a strange sense of joy, and an antidote to the poison of the police.

opened Weelaunee Peoples' Park, it felt to me like a small but important milestone had been reached—another indication that the movement to defend the Atlanta forest continues to grow and to outgrow its limits.

The sudden ubiquity of the cans of seltzer water themselves, cases of them sitting around the forest free for the drinking, felt like one such milestone in its own right. When an occupation reaches a certain level of power and prominence, resources begin to flow and strange abundances appear. I remember boxes of thousands of loose cigarettes arriving at Standing Rock and a small pious circle of chain-smokers forming to package them for distribution to the wider camp. Nobody knew where they came from. As far as I know, the seltzer water came to the Weelaunee Forest from the warehouse of a failed startup somewhere and quickly became the unofficial beverage of the week of action.

The confrontation with the excavator ended with its operator, a neighbor and henchman of Hollywood billionaire Ryan Millsap, fleeing along with the off-duty police working security for him. They left behind Millsap's truck, a 2020 Dodge Ram 5500, which was soon set ablaze. This ended Millsap's second attempt to close down Intrenchment Creek Park and establish his private ownership over it. His first attempt had occurred over a week before, when he sent workers to remove the official park sign, close the parking lot with concrete barricades, and put signs up around the area declaring it "private property." Our response had been to paint the barricades vibrant colors, keeping them in place but open them enough to allow vehicles through, and to declare the opening of a Peoples' Park.

The park feels different now. Millsap attempted to forcibly impose his private ownership but instead shattered it, and now the burnt-out husk of his \$80,000 truck serves as visual proof of how easily such illusions can be dispelled. Instead of scaring away regular park-goers, the burned truck has become an attraction. People come just to look at it and take pictures of it. Something about it brings them joy; they leave visibly elated by what they've seen.

It's also clear that nobody misses the police, who no longer feel comfortable circling the parking lot or coming at night to harass "suspicious looking individuals" despite the old park being open 24 hours a day. Unlike a public park, which is defined by a list of things you're not allowed to do, the peoples' park invites your participation on all levels. You can drive on the bike path. You can dig up the grass and plant a garden. You can put up signs asking people to drive slower on the bike path. You can get a piano on Craigslist and bring it to the woods and play it at 3 am. You can park your car and sleep here because it's safer than the Walmart parking lot and the communal kitchen is cooking a meal every day. You can throw a huge dance party under the canopy and the stars and fall asleep on the soft pine straw.

"No Compliance Nor BMO Alliance" – the bank was disrupted because of its financial backing of Compliance Energy and the Raven mine. Local RCMP were caught off guard: the first officer arrived after 40 minutes. He attempted to confront one of the demonstrators and order them to remove their face covering,⁷ but was surrounded by the other anarchists who screamed at him to fuck off. He backed away from the crowd, which dispersed soon after.

The leaflets included statements such as: "We will not dialogue or negotiate with profit hungry businessmen ... Their hearts are empty; if we want to stop them we must hit them in their wallets ... We are prepared for a long and bitter fight" and also highlighted that the land and sea was being defended from the mine because it was part of the community's "subsistence base." A statement from the demo includes further contextual analysis regarding the necessity of direct action:

"The almost unanimous opposition to Raven Coal from locals highlights that this project is not just controversial, it is unwanted. In a valley known for its legacy of mining and struggle, the people here haven't forgotten their history. The Quinsum underground coal mine just north of Courtenay, outside of Campbell River has been operational for over twenty years despite widespread opposition leading up to opening the mine [...] Experience has shown us that despite lively vocal opposition, projects of resource extraction are pushed ahead, often at the expense of the local community and environment. Communities are consulted only to be disregarded, environments assessed only to be destroyed. We will not be ignored. We will stop this mine!"⁸

★Jun 2012: Anarchists demonstrate boisterously at the AGM of CEC in Vancouver (which is defended by a flank of police), then march to the local head office of BMO. Inside the bank office, "a smoke bomb was set off, useless BMO crap was tossed around" and leaflets were thrown into the air. BMO was targeted because they do business with CEC.⁹



★**Mar 2013:** Anarchists smash all the windows of a BMO Bank in Vancouver, “because it is a symbol of capitalism” and “because it banks with CEC”. The communique also stated “Raven Mine will fail. Compliance Energy will fail. Anarchists are always watching and we will not back down. We will never back down. Fuck Raven Mine! Fuck Bank of Montreal! For the end of all resource extraction.”¹⁰



★**Apr 2013:** “a group of rebels opposing the Raven Coal Mine” launch an info booth campaign in the streets of Courtenay, serving cookies, coffee, and conversation to passers-by. Their banners declared “No Compliance, No Coal, No Compromise” and “For Love of Life, Land & Liberation”¹¹

★**May 2013:** The Comox Valley May Day Anarchist Book Fair features workshops on resistance to the Raven mine, and commemorates “the 100th anniversary of local resistance to the military invasion and occupation of Cumberland by order of BC Attorney General Bowser in 1913. His kilted dragoons were stationed in the village at the behest of the coal barons to protect their financial empire by breaking the Vancouver Island miners’ strike of 1912-1914, and restoring order through the imposition of martial law. Today, anarchists, along with many others, are engaged in an effort to prevent Cumberland from once again becoming a mining town under the thumb of the coal bosses.”¹²

No one was captured or arrested for these actions. No one wanted to disempower themselves by willingly giving themselves up to the racist, misogynist goons of the state in a media-friendly, state-friendly, pre-planned arrest. With each direct action, these self-empowering grassroots folks did the deed, then got the fuck away as quickly as possible. Instead of delegating their agency to affect change by doing actions whose success depends on the whims of courts or the media, their actions took responsibility for themselves and their communities, directly impacting their oppressors and extractivist enemies.

This was not civil disobedience, it was uncivil resistance, which challenged the social order and the myth of social peace. With sharp analyses, street smarts, and nimble use of appropriate tactics, including those of asymmetric conflict, the black bloc¹³ and clandestine sabotage, this liberatory rebellion succeeded – largely

rocks and other projectiles. The irate operator had two Dekalb County police officers to back him up, as well as two other men waiting on the street. It was soon revealed that one of those was Ryan Millsap himself. Millsap believes he is the owner of the land in question, after a controversial land-swap agreement between the Dekalb County government and Blackhall Studios sought to give the land over to the film company so that they could develop it into the largest soundstage complex on Earth. Millsap has since sold much of his holdings in the company in a fashion that nullifies the agreements with the County government and gives, he believes, Millsap personal ownership of the land with few or no obligations to the public.

After a brief interlude, in which forest defenders oriented themselves, the crowd of a few dozen advanced on the attackers. Masked defenders threw rocks at the County police and broke windows out of the truck that was used to carry the excavator in on a flatbed trailer. With the excavator outside the park, a barricade was erected to keep it from re-entering, and volleys of rocks and canned sparkling water kept the police and workers back. Ryan Millsap fled in another vehicle after he was called out by name. When the windows of the excavator were broken, Anthony Wayne James reappeared and repeatedly threatened to shoot all the forest defenders and motioned as if he had a gun several times. Millsap appeared to oversee all of this from a distance. Undeterred by his threats, defenders held the barricades and drove the attackers all the way to the end of the block.

With the immediate threat gone, a search through the truck left in the parking lot revealed a number of contracts for Blackhall Studios, Blackhall Rental Company, Anthony Wayne James drivers license and numerous credit cards. The registration for the vehicle revealed that it was owned personally by Ryan Millsap himself. A great cheer of delight went up after this news was spread, and the mechanic crew stripped the car completely, damaging each and every component of the Ram 5500 that was purchased for \$62,500 by Millsap in 2020. The crowd dispersed, having assured the safety of park attendees, and the sanctity of the land. A few hours later, some anonymous individuals burned the truck.

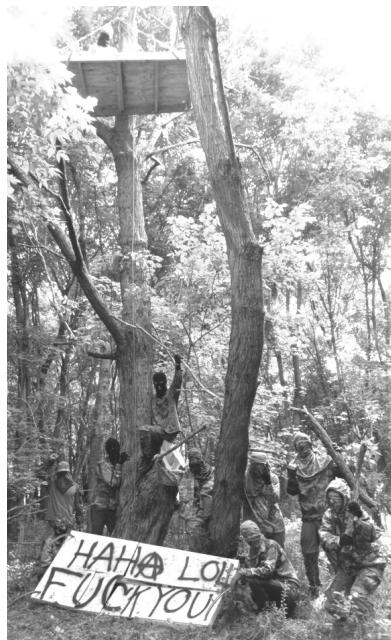
After being held through the morning to ensure no reentry for the police or Millsap and his goons, the barricade was dismantled and the park was open again to the public. By evening, hundreds of people arrived to the forest for the final night of an autonomously organized music festival, passing through the barriers and past the burned-out vehicle, which became something of a public installation and photographic back-drop.

The Truck Became an Attraction³

When the first can of Dr. Priestley’s Seltzer Water flew through the air and exploded onto the windshield of the excavator, temporarily blocking the view of its operator and complicating his attempt to destroy the parking lot gazebo at the newly

ing with abandon. It is dinner time. All the hard work of carrying boxes of produce, jug after jug of water, chopping vegetables, stirring massive pots, washing the dishes from lunch, carrying them and the fresh hot food from the kitchen (in the woods) to the serving area in the living room has paid off. Everything we do here, we do voluntarily—a labor expressing faith in abundance, creating a free meal, a free show, a free experience. This simple fact is more significant than I know how to explain.

One of the highlights for me, this week, has been seeing some co-workers from the restaurant I work at come out into the forest. At work, I'm always bringing fliers, putting up posters, begging my coworkers to come. The way we normally relate is always mediated by work—how miserable but resigned we are to be there, doing what we are doing, day after day, cleaning the bottles and floors just so we can clean them again when we close the next night. Out here in the forest, they ask me, *Do you live out here? Did you put this all together?* I say, *Sometimes, I say, Yes, we all did.*



Boyette Brothers Equipment Rental Service Machines Set On Fire²

The Earth destroying machine that entered the forest yesterday, along with a few others, has been torched. To Boyette Brothers (rental service) + anyone who tries to help build cop city, our message is simple: “If you build it, we will burn it.”

Report Back on the Fight Between Milsap/Dozer/Cops and Forest Defenders³

On the final day of the fourth week of action, forest defenders awoke to shouts about police activity in the recently reopened Intrenchment Creek/ Weelaunee People's Park parking lot.

We arrived to find an angry man named Anthony Wayne James sitting in an excavator and threatening to destroy the gazebo, porta potties, paved trails, and to re-close the barriers at the front of the park, effectively re-closing the public infrastructure. A small number of forest defenders blocked the excavator with only their bodies, including a few who remained under the gazebo while it was struck by the excavator bucket.

More forest defenders soon arrived and began to drive back the excavator with

because the rebels themselves were free: physically free of arrest and incarceration, free of compromising liberal politics, and unfettered by the costly, drawn out, demoralizing legal proceedings that often result from civil disobedience.

In early 2015, Compliance Energy Corporation withdrew its Environmental Assessment application for the Raven coal mine, blaming "misinformation that is circulating in some communities."¹⁴

"Permitting nonviolent protest improves the image of the state. Whether they mean to or not, nonviolent dissidents play the role of a loyal opposition in a performance that dramatizes dissent and creates the illusion that democratic government is not elitist or authoritarian. Pacifists paint the state as benign by giving authority the chance to tolerate a criticism that does not actually threaten its continued operation."

"Modern governments, which have long studied methods of social control, no longer view peace as the default social condition, interrupted only by outside agitators. Now they understand that the natural condition of the world is conflict: rebellion to their rule is inevitable and continuous. Statecraft has become the art of managing conflict, permanently. As long as rebels continue to carry olive branches and a naive view of the struggle, the state knows that it is safe."

"There is nothing in this world currently deserving of the name peace. Rather, it is a question of whose violence frightens us most, and on whose side we will stand."

Peter Gelderloos, *How Nonviolence Protects the State*¹⁵

Footnotes

- 1 Read this recent article for a brief introduction to the story of the Pentlatch people macleans.ca/news/human-remains-found-on-vancouver-island-have-opened-a-door-into-a-lost-world
- 2 vancouver.mediacoop.ca/story/hands-haimen/9466.html
- 3 *Positions Against Prisons*, Fire to the Prisons #10 firetotheprisons.org/wp-content/uploads/ftp10.pdf
- 4 bcbblackout.wordpress.com/agit-prop-and-information/raven-coal
- 5 warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2014/08/12/know-your-enemy-vancouver-police-detective-bert-rainey
- 6 militantz.wordpress.com/2012/05/24/mining-event-disrupted-by-militants-throwing-smelly-substance-hotel-evacuated (nb: the police and their lapdog media misidentified the rotten herring as feces)
- 7 At the time, there was growing persecution against masking up, which was in the process of being criminalized by the federal gov't as part of a crackdown on riots in Vancouver, Toronto & Montreal vancouver.mediacoop.ca/story/canadian-anti-masking-bill-imminent/10849 & vancouver.mediacoop.ca/story/bill-c-309-passed-mask-anyway/18041.html
- 8 vancouver.mediacoop.ca/story/no-raven-coal-propaganda-blitz-and-cassarole-courtney-bc/11221.html
- 9 vancouver.mediacoop.ca/newsrelease/11445
- 10 vancouver.mediacoop.ca/newsrelease/16755
- 11 bcbblackout.wordpress.com/2013/04/22/raven-coal-info-booth-kick-off
- 12 vancouver.mediacoop.ca/events/16599 Local coal mines were hotbeds of militant unionism by the early 1900s, and locus of the fiercely fought “Big Strike” from 1912-1914, which included riots in every coal town from Cumberland to Ladysmith. The police murder of local coal miner, radical labour organizer and war resister Ginger Goodwin in 1918 sparked the first general strike in “Canada”. minersmemorial.ca/ginger-Goodwin & goodwinsway.com/gingergoodwin & mgould-hawke.wordpress.com/2020/04/24/the-great-depression-radical-history-in-vancouver-2002 “The masters can howl: we do not hide our intentions, for we are what they have made us – the dispossessed class that is out to overthrow them.” -Ginger Goodwin
- 13 warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/masked-militants-march-in-anti-pipeline-protest for a brief intro to black block tactics in the context of a local movement
- 14 web.archive.org/web/20151020180922/pqbnnews.com/news/95201001.html
- 15 theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-how-nonviolence-protects-the-state

Fairy Creek Fanfare

The ancient ones
do not need
to answer
to us
for their existence.
They embody
the questions
that make
existence possible.
They flourish
in a world
of connection
as deep
as the mycelium
and as high
as the tallest treetop
reaching for the sunlight.
If we lose them,
we are lost.

Be humble
in their presence.
Walk softly.
We are small
compared to them,

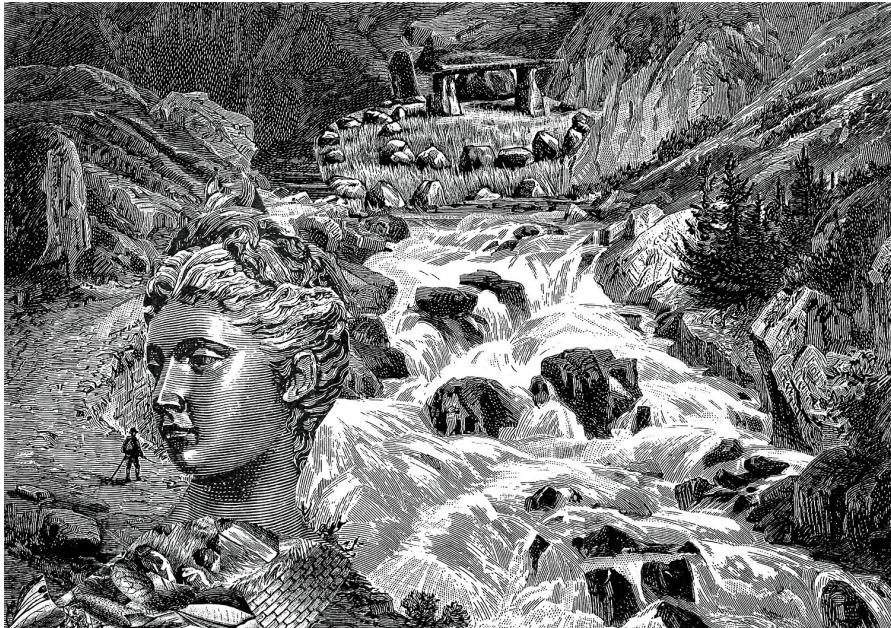
as small
as the tree sitter
nesting in their branches
defending those
without a voice
from those
who only see
the bottom line,
putting their bodies
on the line
in the enchanted woods
where fairies still dance
amongst the sleeping dragons
and life is abundant.

Beyond the initial wound
of stolen land,
Beyond the clear-cut scars
inflicted by
corporate logging racketeers,
Beyond the dollar signs
that rule our lives,
Beyond the politicians' lies
that litter the forest,
Beyond the celebrities

parachuting in
for a photo op
signaling their virtue
and packing their bags,
Beyond dead end questions
of which party
embodies a greener
form of capitalism,
or colonialism.

Way out
back of beyond
we stand
with the trees
in awe
of their earthly majesty
enmeshed
in mythic splendor
listening
like eager children
to fairy tales
of wonder.

Ron Sakolsky
Artwork by Alex Januario



A Tour of the Forest³

At daybreak, the birds turn on as the music turns off. I've been dancing for almost twelve hours. It's early Sunday morning, the end of my birthday. I feel blessed to have spent it in the forest with my friends and many strangers. This was the last day and night of the three-day Defend the Atlanta Forest music festival, an explosive culmination to the fourth week of action. We spent whole days and nights dancing, grooving, moshing to the rhythms of the free forest. My body is filled with an energy that I know doesn't come from it, from the food or water or sleep that sustains it. It comes from a more diffuse and mystical power. A power that only emerges in the connection between many bodies engaged in freely creating a shared world.

The festival began with a friend speaking about the movement to the growing assembly of people standing under and around the massive tarp and stage that has been constructed here. It serves as a temporary venue, no less historic, for shelter, gathering, rage, expression, joy, communing. As she explained that this is a *decentralized* and *autonomous* movement, inviting everyone to repeat back those two fundamental words, I felt a buzz of excitement.

This is an almost 800 acre autonomous forest within the city of Atlanta. It was abandoned, then reclaimed, then sold, swapped, and again abandoned by the city. Now it is used and cared for by us—the people, the public.

When my friend wrapped up her welcome speech, another friend caught my attention through the crowd and asked me to lead some newcomers to the forest on a tour to a treehouse. I made an announcement and a couple dozen people followed me along a path through the trees.

I made stops along the way to point out where the kitchen is and the additional do-it-yourself kitchen where there are always snacks and sometimes people cooking special additional meals. I pointed out the sweat lodge that a Lakota comrade built during the last week of action. I told the story of how this movement became one of the many embers that were scattered when the boot of the state violently stomped out the sacred fire that was Standing Rock. I led them up the hill and encouraged everyone to look up. High above us, we saw a large platform in the tree covered by a domed tarp. There was a hanging potted plant with flowers; someone said, "Ooh, look, they are making it cute, like a home." I answered, "That is her home." Others asked, *How do they get up there? How did people get everything up there?* Everyone looked up at their childhood dreams come true.

At dusk, the sky glows out from the negative space, forming shapes between the thin pine trees. The sun is lighting up the world from below. People roam around the Living Room, our name for the part of the forest where pine straw provides a clean ground for public gatherings, meals, meetings, events, music, and art happenings. Everyone is standing or sitting in circles, eating, chatting, scheming, encountering or reencountering each other; dogs run around us playing and chas-



Violence = incoherently ambiguous category

manipulated with by and for legitimacy

none of us have the secret to a winning strategy

we're stronger when solidarity replaces unity
when we attack like swarms not as an army

"the discipline required to coerce everyone into violent / nonviolent tactics is authoritarian"

if authorities are perceived to monopolize legitimate use of force violence is anything that interrupts or escapes their control

Violence & nonviolence don't exist

instead of debating whether an action is violent we could ask does it negate or reinforce hierarchy? this fundamental question can be asked in any situation about values tactics strategy why would anyone wanna keep dragging debates back to the same tired useless violence/nonviolence dichotomy?

Defining ppl or actions as violent others & excludes them from legitimate discourse violence

is no more neutral than any other tech or tool of social control

inspired by 'the failure of non violence' & 'the violence of legitimacy'
-various

"All the media coverage in the world won't help us if we fail to create a situation in which people feel enabled to defend themselves"

Necessary Actions

by anonymous

In a debate regarding diversity of tactics in Vancouver, Harsha Walia defended militant tactics, most specifically the black bloc, debunking common myths and providing relevant context. I've found a disarmingly simple phrase spoken by her in the debate to be very illuminating: "direct action happens because there is a need for it."¹

There can be a confusing, disempowering fog of fear, uncertainty and doubt² surrounding direct action and diversity of tactics: pervasive myths, false dichotomies, 'false flag' conspiracy theories, circular debates regarding violence/nonviolence, and shade-throwing from many on both the left and the right.³

Direct action happens because there is a need for it.

Just let that sink in for a while.

Does it affect your perception or analysis of any actions that have been debated/contested or seen as controversial?

I think this quote from Walia in the same debate is also particularly insightful:

"There is an unfortunate dichotomy that has been created between so-called community day-to-day organizing and insurrectionary actions."¹

This dichotomy is unfortunate in no small part because of how entrenched it can get, perpetuated even by well-intentioned local anarchists.⁴

There are recurring tendencies for such apparent divides to be deepened along gendered lines, as we continue the struggle to liberate ourselves from patriarchy.

Ultimately, anything that starts to look like us taking responsibility for ourselves, exerting agency, and meeting our needs outside the state and capital (ie. via direct, non-delegated, anarchist action – ie. *via anarchy*), whether it's childcare, self care, self defense, relationships to nature realized through sustenance or sabotage – they're all going to bring us into material conflict with the state and capital, with their domination and repression. In the context of this inescapable reality, "militancy" and "community" are inextricably linked as necessary parts of each other.

Yet knowing that their system is alien to us, we will know that we mustn't fight like good citizens, but like barbarians, bandits, gangs, anarchists. We do not have leaders nor authorities nor followers; what we have are companions, including trees, lovers, children, friends, neighbors, earth, all the beings that comprise the web in which we live. A right cannot be eaten, a law does not allow you to breathe... We are living beings, thus the only company that interests us is that of other living beings, not machines and artifacts of the system.

Concerning the Destruction of Long Engineering Vehicles²

On Mar. 1st, 2022, FIVE large Long Engineering trucks used to do survey work to help delineate destruction in the South Atlanta Forest were destroyed in solidarity with eco-defenders currently protecting the forest from being clear-cut to build cop city and more Hollywood infrastructure for Black Hall Studios.

There will be NO peace for any subcontractors involved with the planning or destruction of the south Atlanta Forest until ALL contracts with the Atlanta Police Foundation & Black Hall Studios have been withdrawn, & the Forest is safe from any and ALL destruction. We do NOT differentiate "pre-construction" & "construction" ... It is EASY to approach vehicles and machinery sitting like ducks in subcontractor parking lots and simply pour gallons of bleach into their gas tanks and render any and all of their equipment used to subjugate the land completely dead and inoperable!

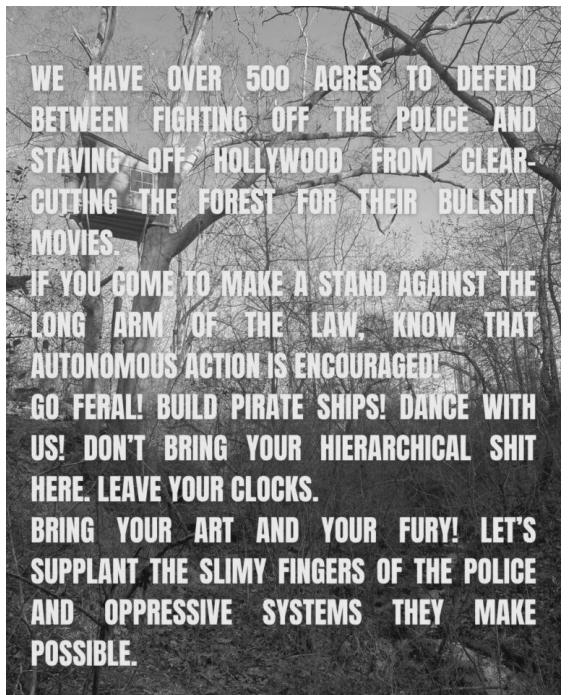
This is a CALL-TO-ACTION for more eco-warriors to replicate these actions in the name of Defending the Forest and ALL creatures wild and Free!

Save the South Atlanta Forest! Destroy all of the machines! Tear up all of the roads! There is no "perfect moment" to act on the horizon, the time is ripe! Fuck your ego and use the cover of darkness to go out and get shit done, for we need more faceless saboteurs to help bankrupt all of these companies from being able to function.

It only costs \$1.00 for a gallon of bleach and it costs them \$50,000.00 (or more!) per vehicle...

DEFEND THE FOREST!
FIGHT THE COPS!
OUR WOODS NOT
HOLLYWOODS!

Bite the Hands of Greed,
-The Wolvez-



Direct Action: Three Excavators Scorched in Atlanta Forest²

In a classic display of arrogance, Blackhall Studios and the contractors they hired to clear cut sixty acres of forest did not believe that we were serious when we committed to frustrate any further attempts at developing “Michelle Obama Park.” Blackhall and the so-called City of Atlanta play the villains in the final chapter of the long and deliberately sanitized history of desecration of land stolen from the Muscogee People and used for chattel slavery, prison slavery, and immeasurable violence. The developers elected to move in three additional excavators to make up for their losses last month. This was a mistake. Consequently, we incinerated all three excavators, rendering them immobile and unusable. We are happy to report that the machinery we destroyed in our last visit remains in the same locations and states we left them in.

This Pride Month, as ever, soulless corporations have been busy bastardizing the rebellious spirit of queerness. These corporations demand a lot of things from us. Money out of our pockets, time away from our loved ones, data that they can spin into ads.. but of queers, corporations demand one thing above all: assimilation. To this end, corporate-controlled media provides a platform only to queer people that are complicit in or responsible for the repression of others. Thanks to this, lesbian police chiefs, gay politicians, bisexual soldiers, nonbinary Raytheon™ employees, and RuPaul (the much-adored patron saint of transphobia, toxicity, and fracking, in case you haven’t heard of him) are the media’s model for an acceptable queer.

We insist on walking another path. An overgrown path. A path covered in kudzu, mud, and branches. This path leads to queer liberation. It’s the path of faggots, trannies, and dykes, and it’s utterly incompatible with the expectations laid out by the Caitlyn Jenners, Erika Shields, and Absolut Vodkas of the world.

We don’t walk this path alone. We follow our trans grandparents, we stand with our bisexual siblings, and we know that every lesbian born long after we’re dead and part of the forest once again will fight to defend it with unmatched vehemence. We recognize that this path leads directly through the vile entities that want to destroy the forest; that this path will lead to direct confrontations with the City of Atlanta and Blackhall Studios. We believe these confrontations will come sooner rather than later.

We know that there’s only one way to carve livable space out of a world that cares more about shitty action films and carceral primacy than having breathable air and drinkable water. The only way is resistance.

We renew our undying commitment: Any further attempts at destroying the Atlanta Forest will be met with similar response. This forest was here long before us, and it will be here long after.

We’ll see to that.

We cannot use their ethical guidelines. We cannot position ourselves within their legality... as though capitalism were just a bad neighbor and not the basis for our existence... We are the bomb in the heart of the machine that wants to grind us up.

– Josep Gardenyes: *Social War, Antisocial Tension*

Footnotes

¹ theanarchistlibrary.org/library/harsha-walia-10-points-on-the-black-bloc

See vancouver.mediacoop.ca/olympics/direct-action.html for an archive of DA against the 2010 Olympics ² Fear, uncertainty, and doubt (often shortened to FUD) is a propaganda tactic used in sales, marketing, public relations, politics, polling and cults. FUD is generally a strategy to influence perception by disseminating negative and dubious or false information, and is a manifestation of the logical fallacy known as the *appeal to fear*.

³ "Sometimes both the right and the left find common cause in their cynicism, believing the same conspiracy theories about how the oppressed cannot possibly take action for themselves. Anything that looks like self-organized direct action is seen as the work of police to justify their brutality." – blackbannerdistro.wordpress.com/2016/04/09/resignation-is-death-responding-to-the-negation-of-anarchy-2 ⁴ See e.g. recent call for submissions for issue #4 of Vancouver-based publication *No More City*: nomore.city/2021/12/06/callout-for-submissions-4-issue-4 where a false dichotomy is created between "direct action and sabotage" and "other forms of struggle". This arguably first began to appear, albeit less explicitly, in the editorial of NMC #3: nomore.city/2021/09/21/3rd-issue-is-out (last para of unnumbered page before the table of contents).



Worth More Standing?

Experiences of Disability Justice, Ableism, Community Care and the unfortunate lack-there-of on the frontlines of Ada'itsx.

I've been experiencing an eight month writers block trying to write about my experiences at Ada'itsx. You could even call it a writer's hard block, perhaps a flying dragon of a writers' hard block. I've been having difficulty trying to celebrate the true moments of collective power, while knowing 'the movement' often perpetuated the harm we were intending to dismantle. Like the title of this piece suggests, the frontlines are a vast, and often contradictory space that was sometimes aligned to disability justice and other times was blatantly ablest. The frontlines of Ada'itsx were all of these things, everything in between, and beyond too. Rather than trying to articulate the meaning of my experiences, I've decided just to share a few of them:

One day I was denied support to hike to another camp by multiple people in our community, because it would slow down the mission to carry another bag of concrete. Later that same day, I hiked 11km in ceremony where my hand was held the entire time.

We had designated accessible parking spots and pit toilets (until the RCMP destroyed them)

The first time I was arrested, the RCMP told me they didn't believe that I was disabled, and they roughed me around about to prove their point.

The second time I was arrested, I cemented my walker into the road, and forced the RCMP to at least acknowledge they were forcibly removing a disabled person from their mobility aid. The next day the Fairy Creek media team publicly wrote that "my mobility 'issues' didn't matter".

One day I expressed I couldn't go to one of the camps because I literally could not navigate its inaccessibility. The next day, the first camp priority was digging an accessible trail to the pit toilet.



There also appears to be a different approach to coalition-building in Atlanta. An Indigenous activist named Abundia, who is Nahua and Apache, has been acting as a bridge between the Atlanta protesters and the Muscogee people. The Muscogee now largely reside in Oklahoma after being forcibly displaced during the Trail of Tears era in the 1800's. In November 2021, members of the Muscogee and Seminole tribes gathered in the South River Forest, along with hundreds of local Atlantans, for a traditional stomp dance ceremony and cultural sharing. For their part, the Muscogee delegation have called on everyone to "defend the land from the Cop City and Blackhall developments." There does not appear to be the same permission or consent protocols that many in BC have aspired to when it comes to indigenous sovereignty/solidarity, but it is of course a different context with much nuance. It does appear that there is a general sense in Atlanta that the fight doesn't belong to any one group, with a larger emphasis on autonomous groups acting in loose solidarity than we saw at Fairy Creek.

The fight with the police has followed a very different tempo than Fairy Creek, where instead of a grinding war of attrition, the police in Atlanta only show up to the South River Forest in small deployments, taking many small losses. Police may be afraid that the widespread, militant defense of the Atlanta Forest and country-wide solidarity attacks could turn into a generalized uprising such as erupted after they murder of George Floyd.

The following pieces have been pulled from various online sources and are presented in rough chronological order. To learn more, we highly recommend the zine *Beneath the Concrete, the Forest: Accounts from the Defense of the Atlanta Forest*. In addition, for an excellent overview of the movement, check out the zine *The City in the Forest: Reinventing Resistance for an Age of Climate Crisis and Police Militarization*.



Forest Defense in Atlanta

The remainder of this volume of Creeker is devoted to a land defense movement on the opposite corner of the continent. The Defend the Atlanta Forest / Stop Cop City grassroots movement is made up of many groups and individuals. At the center of the fight is the South River Forest in Atlanta, Georgia where two major developments are being opposed. One is Blackhall Studios, led by its CEO Ryan Milsap, where the plan is to clearcut 200 acres to greatly expand its film studio, including what would be the biggest soundstage in the english-speaking world. The other is a project that has been dubbed Cop City, where the Atlanta Police Foundation wants to cut 85 acres of forest to build the largest urban warfare training compound in the country, which people are calling a reactionary move by the police after the 2020 George Floyd riots swept across the country. The compound would include a mock city for police to practice urban warfare, crowd control, raids on apartments, etc, as well as shooting ranges for machine guns and heavy weaponry, a bomb testing site, and potentially a new jail. The movement started in 2021 and has gained a lot of momentum since.

We find this movement to be interesting and inspiring in the ways that is both similar and dissimilar to the Fairy Creek blockades. On the one hand, it is forest defense, complete with barricades, treesits, and emphasizes decentralized action (including dance parties). Much of the written word that have come out of the forest there will resonate strongly with anyone who was at Fairy Creek. On the other hand, this is an urban forest and perhaps could be contrasted more closely with the fight (or lack, thereof) against the TMX pipeline in the Greater Vancouver area.

The movement in Atlanta also differs on several other key points. There appears to be a significant use of a SHAC-style¹ strategy, rare since the Green Scare¹, that prioritizes scaring off subcontractors so that the main contractor can't get any work done on their projects. In the Atlanta case, it has meant going after subcontractor CEO's houses and handing out leaflets about them at their churches, as a few examples. This strategy has not been widely seen since the mid-2000s. Part of the Green Scare was seen as a reaction against the increasing success of such a strategy and launched such overwhelming repression that it has not been seen much since. This strategy in Atlanta has spread widely across the U.S., with many solidarity attacks on companies that are doing business with Blackhall Studios or Cop City.

Another point of difference between the movements is more support for a full spectrum of tactics, where less risky actions like marches and flooding phone lines are seen to go hand in hand with sabotaging machinery and other property damage, as well throwing rocks at and doxing cops (the latter was something that CIRG was clearly worried about). It is worth noting that many of the anonymous communiques claiming sabotage and militant resistance have been written by folks identifying as queer and BIPOC. It is worth pointing out that there have been well under 100 arrests in the Atlanta movement to date.

I was piggy-backed up Mario's trail.

I booty scoured from Ridge to Heli, and heard a marbled murrelet call on the way down.

The RCMP set up an exclusion line between me and my mobility aid.

The RCMP stole my walker.

On the one hand, as a physically disabled woman I have felt so unbelievably held and heard by a community that could dig an accessible pit toilet in a day. Never before had I been in a community with so many disabled and able-bodied allies who listened, understood and supported each other's experiences. The feeling of embeddedness within these sub-pockets of the community at Ada'itsx, was one of the most powerful things I've ever known... And then on the other hand, I've felt like I was worth less than a bag of concrete and entirely disregarded by those who wouldn't understand that this 'movement' is about much more than the trees.

Before the RCMP began a strategic, brutal, relentless, and unlawful raid on Ada'istx, we were building our capacity for community care, and we're working on disability lead accessibility projects, including accessible boardwalks through the Ancient Forests and creating immunocompromised safer kitchens.. Once the raid began, the RCMP targeted BIPOC and those with other oppressed identities among us. Those who experience systemic oppression are often also the people who know how to create community care, who can fiercely depend on each other, who can actually keep each other safer. This threatens the RCMP, and the state, because it makes them obsolete, powerless. The RCMP strategically and brutally attack and arrest BIPOC and other systemically oppressed identities, in order to erode our collective capacity to keep each other safer.

To keep each other safer, we need strong community that honors leadership of the most affected. To create community outside of colonial, heteropatriarchical, racist, ablest, capitalism we need to show up willing to unlearn the oppressive systems we've internalized. This means we need to counter the values embedded in systems of oppression: When we are harmed by capitalist efficiency, we need to respond with slowness. When we are harmed by urgency, we need to respond with continuity. When we are harmed by profit, we need to respond with reciprocity. When we are harmed by individualism, we need to respond with community care. And we need to show up willing to acknowledge when we aren't embodying these transformations, and take accountability for the oppression we perpetuate. We need to recognize the collective power of doing this, and know that decentralization is not an excuse to avoid accountability. My deepest gratitude to those who have shown up in community to do this work in a good way. I see you, I love you.

Oceanspray asks the following questions of the "white, settler leadership that has been prevalent on the front lines" to hold accountability and provoke thought about trauma informed frontline organizing:

Before arriving at camp, where is information on how people will be supported when they arrive with accessibility needs?

What concrete actions are you taking to ensure the space feels safer for a diversity of folk? How are you creating actions to allow the participation of neurodiverse folks, people with mobility aids, people with mental health challenges such as PTSD that can easily be exacerbated in high stress environments and parents with young children?

While at camp, where is there a safer space to discuss the trauma that happened that day? How can you check in on participants and provide peer mental health supports

How can you adapt daily expectations of participation to those with limited energy and capacity?

After time at camp, are you continuing to support disabled community members when they have returned from camp and are struggling with a decline in mental health?

Emotional support? How can we best support you now and after?

How can we support those who will get over stimulated?

How can we respect a harm reduction approach and not penalize folks who need to cope with the trauma they have experienced?

How can we check in on those who have been subject to ableism at camp and ensure they feel safer and that actions are accessible for them in the future?

Organizers ask land defenders over and over if people are willing to be arrested, so much so that it feels like an obligation, a "right of passage." **How are you ensuring people are actively consenting to what is being asked of them?**

In June I witnessed numerous white, able bodied folks enthusiastically explaining their multiple arrests and how in their mind they suffered no harm. Are you aware and making others aware of the history of the RCMP and how we need to ensure that BIPOC, disabled and other marginalized folk feel supported and as safe as they can with police presence? Do participants understand the privilege they hold as able bodied, neurotypical settlers and that they will probably be treated with significantly less violence than stigmatized land defenders?

A Simple Word Find Puzzle

W B R D I B L G G Z B N P Y I U K G I T J O
X Z B C E H Q Q J J C Y Q L D T D O G B F U
R Q V V D F N C R F E J G R G W N F H E S X
D X H M D G O H D Y S R A O K X L E G P G Z
T Y Q F I L E B K Z D I X N W E Z F X L X R
J R F V E O E P M R H Q X G T P J R T K E Q
F H U D H R D S K K Z K Q J Q G R G N L J F
L O B Z K O H A B E W R R Y O W H R B S J N
V J L A R Z B K R Q O E Z L U R F B F O B I
D E S T R O Y W H A T D E S T R O Y S Y O U
R K E V G K G E J Z L U O H V C X I B B Z W
G Z C V D Y O S F P Q L J S W K J T S G Y U
R D W D J X S J Q F A G L D V V P T G F Y D
J H V Q J F F Z S L D T L X T Y Q P F V Z J
E K P Y Q C X O G D J J L O E X N J I H W Y
O J U Z I E Z N G J P A H Q C H Q Z D E X C
Q P O D C U X P O Q J K U D V Q E V D W D P
Y D L N J C W E F H R Q W Q O P J F V Q I V
T B T T E K Z X M A O Q W Q J C S Q D H H N



How do we pursue wonder, growth, and pleasure while simultaneously ensuring that our friends and comrades can do the same? Can we increase our capacities for care regardless of whether it is directly fueling a particular movement or not? How do we do that while also sharpening our claws and undermining the runaway death machine that is society? How do we harness our bottomless anger while together *and* while alone in a way that honors the need to fight back simply because it's more satisfying than the alternative?

Yes, we need to keep us safe and there is a lot of room for improvement.
But we also need to keep us dangerous.

Footnotes

1 [instagram.com/p/CexKkSrLZib/?igshid=MTA0ZTI1NzA=](https://www.instagram.com/p/CexKkSrLZib/?igshid=MTA0ZTI1NzA=)

2 Though the zines *After the Crest* and *Self as Other* both have much to say on similar topics.

3 Big Lonely Doug is a massive, well-known Douglas-Fir tree that was the only tree spared in a cutblock years ago, not far from Fairy Creek. It is now a tourist attraction.

4 The Shutdown Canada solidarity actions, for example



We should NOT gloat about arrests. Participants need to recognize their privileges, and have a trauma informed approach when discussing police violence.

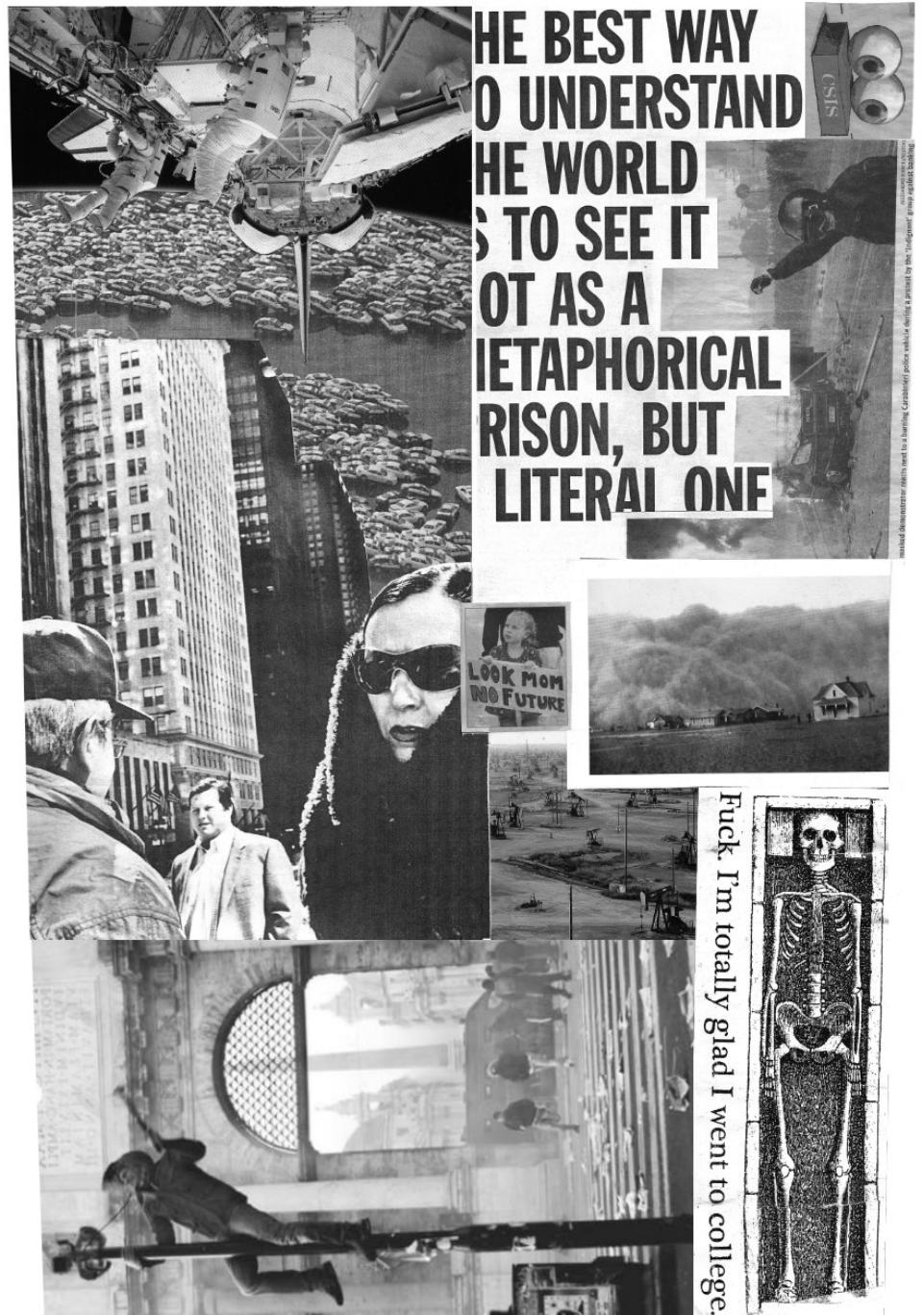
Yellow Cedar reminds of the importance of locating community with the natural world by sharing the words of Chief Dan George of Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass, they speak to me. The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the sea, speaks to me. The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrop on the flower, speaks to me. The strength of the fire, the taste of the salmon, the trail of the sun, and the life that never goes away, they speak to me. And my heart soars.

-Chief Dan George

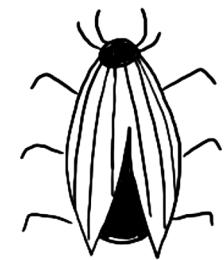


Desert of the Metaphorest



Part of the challenge and heartbreak is that so many people have an all-or-nothing attitude around the concept of ‘winning’, as though there is some sort of fixed destination we are travelling to and anything that falls short is a waste of energy. Recalibrating our goals doesn’t mean compromising our politics, but it does mean reflecting on what it is we are trying to accomplish in the short, medium, and long term collectively and as individuals.

Sometimes it feels like we’re all in this together, but honestly most of the time it doesn’t feel that way at all. Most days it seems like honing my own personal need to strike back is the only spiritual practice I have. It can be easier to find momentum when collective actions are already happening⁴ and these are moments to cherish, but waiting around for these moments kinda sucks. It would be better to figure out how to create our own moments, even if they lack visibility.



When I get to catch up with people I met at the blockade, I try to figure out if they are still carrying the torch. If they are, I wonder how they’ll maintain momentum on a personal level without needing their worth to be externally measured by participating in visible movements. There usually aren’t consistently inspiring local social ruptures to participate in and besides, people need to recoup between sprints. How well will they weather the time spent between the crests of revolt, especially with the increasing unpredictability we’ve seen in this decade so far?



Why do you fight? Self-actualization? Catharsis? Revenge? To maintain the notion that you are a certain kind of person? To make friends? Are there times when you are just going through the motions due to inertia or to satisfy the expectations of others?

Outside of the unpredictable ebbs and flows of insurrection, what nourishes you most? Do you intentionally put the fire out and squirrel away a few embers out of sight for safekeeping? How do you deal with all the grief?

Can you develop a personal relationship with the land that enriches you and increases your capacity without reproducing the usual extractive logic? How can we use such a practice to up the ante when developers or industry inevitably show up?

Who are the people that you can escape banality with for a day or a week and have immersive experiences and tend the fire together? Can we mutually encourage each other to develop skills and interests on a regular basis, simply for enjoyment, but that also happen to be useful when you decide it’s time to throw down again? Who are the people that will keep you honest, that will tell you to your face if they see you going down a path where your politics and practice cease to pose a threat to the established order? What are the relationships you can put significant emotional energy into to form an affinity group with for when things go down in the future?

And so the next time around, the land defenders of yesteryear stay home because they've become unconscionably cynical either through a lost sense of agency or through the long decline of personally investing in the strategy of working within the system they once claimed to oppose. Meanwhile, today's land defenders arrive at the blockade hopelessly naive (if they arrive at all), destined to learn all lessons the hard way and then burn out.

Some people point to the idea of historical amnesia, but it's not that these lessons were learned and then forgotten... it's that they were never widely known to begin with. Too many people don't have access to the radical memory that *does exist* out there. There are fires, of both indigenous and settler lineages, that have never stopped burning, but they aren't easy to find, even if you're looking for them.

How many people have a good understanding of the resistance that has happened in the region even in the last 5-10 years, let alone centuries? How many people have sat and listened to the previous generation of land defenders share their thoughts around effective and ineffective resistance, strategic lessons, experiences of repression, and how to cope with the long defeat? It's arrogant not to look to the past, but we also need to be clear on the importance of holding space for new people to be critical so that we can hear new perspectives and allow the accumulated knowledge to be fluid. Every generation has something new to offer, but without exposing new perspectives to offerings from the past, we are left with something incomplete. It's like expecting to have a long, hot fire using only cedar shavings. Likewise, applying only inherited lessons means trying to stay warm from deeply buried embers.

For an example of how inadequately the torch is usually passed on, we can look at the documentaries that have been made about Fairy Creek and how often they miss the mark. Every single one of them spends its time trying to educate the viewer on ecology and climate change, or else in having a land defender on camera explain why they cared enough to show up at the blockade. Very little about the actual messiness of resisting logging and cops beyond showing a few clips of police violence. And nothing reflecting on how we might more effectively oppose the state and industry over the long haul. The end result merely historicizes and whitewashes an actual revolt, taking all the life out of it. They spend more time talking about Big Lonely Doug³ than they do reflecting on what it might take to effectively fight back and what it's like for people after the blockade ends. As though in 2022, all that's missing is the layman understanding that intact forests mitigate climate change. As though explaining basic biology to the viewer isn't a tone deaf insult in the face of floods, wildfires, heat waves, and pandemics. As though the antidote to climate dread is a fucking PBS documentary. What we want to learn is how to integrate the clarity of the blockade back into our everyday lives, how to fight more effectively and sustainably, and how to go on the offensive.



Because I'm in Love

by Will Falk

Summertime and I'm in love
with what's left of a forest.

She lures me from the hot sun
into the cool, delicious embrace
of her green and golden shade.

She sings more than a song.
With birds in her branches,
and the dancing of ten thousand leaves,
she composes a full siren's symphony
that carries with the pollen and seeds
on a soft, smooth, gentle breeze.

She shares her traumas with me.
Echoes of engines, screaming saws,
and the unwanted advances
of axe-wielding deaf men.
A plague of ink disease
sweeping through chestnut elders,
leaving no one to care for
all the struggling saplings.

I learn she's lost so many loves.
Wolves and wood bison.
The humans who learned her language.
Ancient groves of old-growth giants.

Even as broken as her beauty is,
I tell her I'm inadequate, unworthy.

My tongue is not skilled enough
to kiss away her pain,
to lick the sweet xylem sap dripping
down the silver skin of red maples
and from her many wounds,

to speak the words necessary
to describe the pain hiding
behind the sugar in her syrup.

My fingers are not deft enough
to caress away the memories
of her many violations,

to draw her pleasure from the shadows
as often as she needs,
as often as it takes,
to remember that
there are still men
who want to learn to love

to write verse powerful enough
to pierce the thickness
of her former torturers' indifference
so that they will
never, ever do this again.

She responds with butterflies, bear cubs,
and the quivering legs of a speckled,
white-tailed fawn leaning on
her mother's strong flanks,
trying so hard to take her very first step

and I know no matter how
inadequate or unworthy I think I am,
I will try -- I must try -- too
because, of course, I'm in love.



Embedding Embers

'We Keep Us Safe' sure sounded good for a while, didn't it? Despite some failings, there were times when it was absolutely true. But then we left the blockade and returned to the isolation of industrialized society. In some ways, everything was simpler when a common enemy was right in front of us. It's a lot harder when we're distracted by our own separate, yet remarkably similar challenges: housing, mental health, social alienation, etc. How do we understand safety in the context of increasing existential threats and accelerating unrest? How do we balance out the need to feel safe and secure with a desire to act boldly and beyond our comfort zones? Is balance possible? Was it ever?

Amidst all this, 'community', 'self-care' and 'trauma-informed' still remain vague buzzwords. Would the concept of self-care serve us better if we radically expanded our notions of self to include each other? How do we bring the sense of interconnectivity back with us from the blockade?

Even when we are physically together, safety means different things to different people. We have seen actions where people absolutely fail to even try to keep each other safe, where the entire point seems to be to put someone at the mercy of some cop, logger, or irate commuter¹. What does it mean to talk about defending the land when we aren't even willing to defend ourselves?

If Fairy Creek marked someone's first intensive foray into direct action, they likely left with new ideas swirling around their head: decentralization, autonomy, and mutual aid to name a few. With all that probably came a new or deepened hatred for cops, distrust of media and politicians, and a deeper understanding of resource extraction economies. Through all of it, someone can leave the blockade with a certain clarity, it just doesn't seem to last long.

Our experiences in the various camps were completely separate from our regular existence. Most people didn't have the opportunity after they left to recharge and untangle their feelings and thoughts in a healthy environment with supportive peers. Instead, people had no option but to begrudgingly re-enter the belly of the beast, often alone. Even if they'd had the space, support, and intention, unpacking everything society has every taught us is a lifelong process.

In this state of overwhelm, we are continually bombarded with the dominant paradigm from both the outside world and, worse, closer to home. Centuries of the colonial-capitalist project have firmly fixed the terms of debate. Some people are genuinely curious to hear stories of adventure, but only as a cautionary tale, and only if we admit that in the end it was fun, yes, but perhaps we got carried away a



little. If we express any insights that might hint at the different ways we'd like to approach the world, we are quickly cornered. Cue the lecture about how *real* change happens: "Have some respect for the process of democracy, change is slow." "You sure are against a lot of things, but what are you for?" "You're starting to sound like an extremist." "Try to be more realistic. Have you thought about going back to school? You know, there's lots of great organizations you can volunteer with." "Maybe you should get into politics if you think you have all the solutions." "Moderate yourself and cash in, you can probably get paid to spend a few days in the forest per month." "Besides, it's not really selling out if everyone's doing it, right?"

Not feeling heard by the people we open up to leaves a bad taste in the mouth, to say the least. The people around us don't realize that when they throw cold water on one of the most intense and meaningful episodes of our lives, they are participating in a form of counter-insurgency. We are essentially being told that we are misinterpreting our own dreams. The imagination-expanding aspects of that summer tend to seize up inside us when exposed to such unexpected hostility. The resulting bitterness we feel can rule out any possible vulnerability, because it's just not safe to share such fragile notions of these different possible ways of relating to this world with people who don't want to hear them. The flame flickers, hesitates. We risk becoming someone who merely did a thing once and thinks about it from time to time.

It would be easier to weather the storm if we could find the conversations and relationships that truly feed that fire, but it seems like everyone from the blockade is just as discombobulated. It was one thing to show up at the blockade and see someone who'd already been there for a few weeks model courage, resilience, and well-honed tactics, but there is little inspiration to draw on when it comes to fighting the longer fight, the one that too often it feels like we are fighting alone. This isn't the first movement to struggle with aftercare. Someone has yet to write The Post-Blockade Handbook².

The State continues the cyclical process of colonization and counter-insurgency by seeking to break the bonds of resistance communities. One of the end results they seek is to keep the torch from being passed. If we're all alienated from each other, lessons can't be collectively learned and a vacuum is created. This is how we end up with exclusively 'non-violent' movements and piecemeal reformism as the only accepted strategies, both great examples of counter-insurgency even if their advocates have good intentions.

